

Teenage Day

Saturday 8th October 2016

Weston super Mare



Background/Preparation

Jessie May had received information that Severnside Rail were providing free rail travel for disadvantaged children. Ruth Butcher contacted Dr Miriam Ricci at the Centre for Transport & Society Department of Geography and Environmental Management UWE and was advised that the children and young people on Jessie May's caseload would be eligible for this offer. Following a conversation between Ruth and Tracie Steer it was agreed that Tracie would look into the possibility of incorporating this offer into a Teenage Day during October half term. Ruth forwarded Tracie the email from Dr Miriam Ricci with the details of the days out scheme. Tracie looked into the route options that were available (any GWR train routes within the West of England area) and considered possible departure stations and destinations. She also considered the teenagers that would most likely be invited to attend the day. (Independent Electric wheelchair users)

Deciding on the departure station:

The most convenient departure station was Bristol Temple Meads. It is easily accessible by road to parents in our area. There is plenty of parking at the station for parents to drop off and collect the teenagers and it is a stop on many of the available routes.

Deciding on the destination:

1. What destinations were available from Bristol Temple Meads?
2. What activities were available at the destination?

3. Were there suitable toilet/changing facilities nearby?
 1. The tourist information website for the GWR area highlighted the Weston Super Mare annual Sand Sculpture Festival. Tracie felt that this could be an age appropriate event for the teenagers to visit and, as it was also on a route available from Bristol Temple Meads, considered it a potential destination.
 2. She checked the Sand Sculpture Festival website for information of dates, wheelchair access, prices etc. As the exhibition appeared to be suitable she contacted the organisers to express an interest and to ask if there would be any concessions available to the group. Caroline Belt, Project Manager, was happy to accommodate the group and offered free entry to all Jessie May nurses, discounted entry of £2.50 for the teenagers and the provision of an age appropriate quiz activity that was usually offered to school groups. Tracie then looked into what other activities could be added to the day at this location to make it an enjoyable outing for the teenagers. Obviously there was the beach and sea front promenade with assorted shops and cafes. There was also the Grand Pier with its arcades and long covered walkway that would provide an excellent wet weather option should it rain. Plenty of options for the teenagers to choose from, allowing them to be involved in the planning of their day.
 3. The teenagers that were going to be invited to attend the day are all in powered wheelchairs and all require hoisting in and out of their chairs. Therefore it was necessary to have access to appropriate changing facilities should they be required. Tracie searched the Changing Places website and established that the Town hall had a well-equipped disabled toilet, complete with ceiling hoist and adult sized changing bed. It would be accessible, with the use of a radar key, for the duration of the day. Tracie then used google maps to establish that the location of the Town hall was less than a 10 minute walk from either the station or the sea front.

Planning the journey/booking the tickets

The Days Out by Train Scheme run by Severnside had an online enquiry and booking form that had to be completed in order to request the rail tickets that were part of the offer. Tracie completed the form and specified, in the relevant special request box, that the party would consist of 6 adults accompanying 4 teenagers in electric wheelchairs. A reply email confirmed both the booking and the arrangement of assistance from the station teams.

Following a conversation between Ruth and Tracie about the booking of wheelchair space availability, Tracie rang GWR and asked for confirmation of the railway's ability to provide space for 4 electric wheelchairs on the trains that were booked. She was assured that the trains would be able to accommodate the wheelchairs and that once the tickets had been booked it would only take a phone call to the assisted travel team to reserve the spaces. Tracie rang the assisted travel team to confirm this.

Contacting parents to invite the teenagers

Tracie rang the parents of 3 of the boys to outline the planned day out and to establish if they thought that their sons would be interested. She asked Caroline Butcher to discuss it with the parents of the fourth teenager as she was going to be visiting the family and Tracie did not know them.

Recce of the day out

It was agreed that it would be useful for Tracie to trial the day out before it took place in order to properly risk assess the different aspects of the day to include:

1. Assessing the wheelchair access to the station platforms at Bristol Temple Meads and Weston Super Mare
2. Establishing what wheelchair provision was available on the trains and what support would be required from station teams.
3. Checking the route to the Town hall and visiting the disabled toilet to check the facilities, including checking the hoist battery.
4. Checking the route to the Sand Sculpture Festival and entering it to ensure that the walkways were suitable for electric wheelchairs.
5. Visiting the Grand Pier to see if the covered walkway, arcade and cafes were wheelchair friendly.
6. Checking the disabled toilet facilities available on the Grand Pier.

1. The station platforms were accessible, by lift at Bristol Temple Mead, and by railway staff assisted track crossing at Weston Super Mare.
2. The wheelchair provision was **NOT** appropriate but the station teams were able to provide ramp support for boarding the trains.
3. The pavements and roads were accessible and the Town hall had fantastic toilet facilities with fully working equipment.
4. The pavements and roads were accessible and the walkways were sturdy wooden boarded throughout.
5. The Grand Pier covered walkway, arcade and cafes were very clear, wide and uncluttered with large automatic doors for easy wheelchair access.
6. The disabled toilet did not have a changing bed but was perfectly acceptable for wheelchair access to enable the boys to be supported in going to the toilet.

Wheelchair provision on the trains

Tracie had a lengthy discussion with the ticket collectors on the way to Weston Super Mare. They were very understanding of the frustration caused by the inaccurate information that had been given in relation to the number of wheelchair spaces that would be available. They thought that possibly the high speed trains might have more facilities and recommended speaking to a customer ambassador in person back at Bristol Temple Meads. Tracie spoke to a customer ambassador and explained the situation. Once again they were very understanding and spent a considerable amount of time apologising for the misinformation and making phone calls to different people to try to resolve the problem. Unfortunately the outcome of these calls was that it was established that only 2 spaces could be guaranteed on any given train to Weston Super Mare and 1 of these would be in first class and therefore up to the discretion of the train manager.

Resolving the problem

Tracie rang 2 parents and explained the situation. Fortunately they were both extremely

understanding and fantastically accommodating and agreed to drop and then collect their sons from Weston Super Mare instead of Bristol Temple Meads. Each family had a personalised letter sent both by email and post containing their specific itinerary details and information about what would be required on the day.

On The Day

Briefing for the day

Each of the Jessie May nurses (Gillian Alexander, Janet Brown, Nicola Burand, Tracie Steer, Polly Chapman and Student nurse Gemma Warren) had been sent emails detailing the itinerary for the day. We met at Bristol Temple Meads station and discussed what role each of them had been allocated for the day and what that entailed. 4 of the nurses had been allocated a teenager for the day, 2 of the nurses were available as extra staff to provide additional support as required for toileting etc. (the ratio of 6:4 nurses: teenagers also allowed for the provision of emergency cover should either a teenager or member of staff be taken ill)

The train journey and handovers

We had a handover of one of the teenagers at Bristol Temple Meads and then waited for our station team member to accompany us to the correct platform and assist with the ramp for the wheelchair. (Somewhat frustratingly we were on a train with room for at least 3 wheelchairs) At Weston Super Mare we were escorted across the tracks by another station team member and then we had handovers from the 3 teenagers that we had agreed to meet there at the main entrance.

The Sand Sculpture Festival

We made our way to the sea front in convoy. The boys were thoroughly skilful in navigating the pavements and roads. One of the roads had a central reservation with a slightly raised kerb that made it difficult for the wheelchairs to climb but the boys dealt with it safely by manoeuvring around it. Once on the sea front they raced all over the place, it was like watching synchronised dancing! The boys each took part in completing the quizzes provided for us by the Sand Sculpture team. The board walks were easy for them to navigate and we only had one wheel in the sand moment when they tried to pass each other. Much to the amusement of the other boys!



The Grand Pier

Another race along the sea front, with the older boys comparing the relative merits of each of their chairs and the nurses walking briskly to keep up! As far as the boys were concerned there was no time to waste as lunch was calling and they were all hungry!

(Julian Withers and Fiona Foster of the fundraising team have recently established links with The Grand Pier and kindly offered to approach the Pier to see if they would be able to offer any support to the teenage day out. Fiona successfully organised for us to have space in the cafe set aside for the 4 wheelchairs, together with free meals for the boys!)



Lunch

The menu was studied and meals were ordered:

One sausage and chips – easy. “Where’s the ketchup?”

One chicken nuggets and chips – easy. “Where’s the ketchup?”

One burger and chips – easy. “Where’s the cheese? Seriously, you can’t have a burger without cheese!! I mean to say”

take 2. One burger with cheese and chips – easy.

One chicken nuggets and chips, with gravy – easy. “I can’t eat this, the gravy has been poured over the chips!”

take 2. One chicken nuggets and chips, with gravy - in a cup – easy. “I can’t eat this it’s on a small plate!”

take 3. One chicken nuggets and chips, with gravy - in a cup, on a large plate – easy!!!



Many, many thanks to the lovely, patient, understanding young man who served us with a smile on his face throughout.

After lunch and a toilet stop for the boys we ventured into the arcade. They really loved whizzing around from one grabby machine to the next, from one shooting weird creatures' machine to the next, from one noisy box to the next!



What was great was the fact that the arcade is so well laid out that despite being full of different machines and games there was still plenty of room for 4 boys in electric wheelchairs to completely zoom about and lose sight of each other whilst doing their own thing. The outside area of the pier is easily accessed through large automatic doors and the boys chose to nip in and out as they so desired.



Back racing through the covered walkway and it was time to stop for ice cream, doughnuts or even a stick of rock. The shops were explored and a few souvenirs were purchased for siblings before we had to head back to the station.

Handover and train journey home

We made our way back to the station and had handovers for 3 of the boys. Tracie asked each of them to answer a few questions about the day for our feedback and reflection on the day. The station team helped with the ramp for the wheelchair and we boarded our train home. (space for 3 wheelchairs again!!) During the journey home we reflected on the day and discussed what had worked well and what might have worked better. The station team assisted with the ramp once again when we arrived at Bristol Temple Meads. Final handover of the day for the last of the teenagers.

Feedback from the boys

Have you had a good day?	What did you enjoy about the day?	What was your favourite part of the day?	Would you come on a teenage day again?	What would you score today out of 10?
Yes	My sausage, chips and hot chocolate.	I liked the Pier	Yes	NA
Yes	Lunch!	The Pier	Yes, definitely.	10
Yes	Lunch!	The Pier and arcade games	Yes, I wouldn't change it.	10
It was alright. (Yes. If you don't tell Mum because she'll say yes to it again without telling me!)	The chicken nuggets, chips and especially the gravy!	The arcade grabby machines. Going on the train.	Yes, if it was a different place next time because the roads were too bumpy. And if I was given more notice!	8 ½ (10 if you don't tell mum because she'll only say I told you so!)

Reflections from the Nurses

What worked well?	What did not work well?	What changes might make it better next time?
<p>It was a lovely age appropriate experience.</p> <p>The boy's independence was promoted and encouraged.</p> <p>The boys were able to make their own choices.</p> <p>They really enjoyed the food!</p> <p>The restaurant staff were really VERY accommodating.</p> <p>The weather was good.</p> <p>The Ratio of nurses: teenagers worked well.</p> <p>The pier and the arcade were easily big enough to accommodate the 4 electric wheelchairs with room to spare.</p> <p>The sea front and pier walkway were great for the boys to race up and down – safely!</p> <p>The toilet / changing facilities were a good size, clean and easy to get to.</p>	<p>The lack of guaranteed Wheelchair spaces on the trains meaning that only 1 of the boys got to enjoy the train experience. (Especially frustrating as there was in fact space for 3 wheelchairs on both journeys)</p> <p>One of the wheelchair wheels falling off of the board walk and into the sand.</p> <p>The state of some of the roads and pavements. Rather bumpy in places and a raised kerb on one of the central reservations.</p>	<p>Should we wear our purple uniforms? Some of the nurses felt very conspicuous and wondered if the teenagers would feel uncomfortable too. (Interestingly when the boys were asked if they would have preferred us to not have worn our uniforms they said that they didn't mind)</p> <p>Could the teenagers be involved in the choice of location / activity next time?</p> <p>Could the teenagers be more involved in the planning?</p>